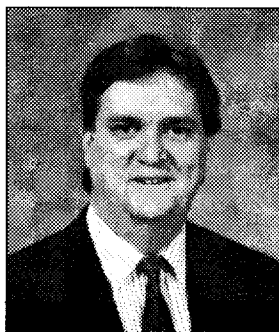


Net growing due to everyday people

By Jim Carroll



Jim Carroll is the co-author of the national bestseller, the *Canadian Internet Handbook* and 17 other books about the Internet, with five new books coming out in the fall of 1997. His new book *Surviving the Information Age*, written to help stressed-out baby boomers cope with the technological world exploding around them, is available in bookstores everywhere. He can be reached on the Internet at jcarroll@jimcarroll.com, and has an online site containing many other articles concerning the Internet on the World Wide Web on the Internet at <http://www.jimcarroll.com/>. He welcomes your comments.

I have not written a column for a little while—the reason being that I go into “hermit mode” during June and July every year, as my co-author and I work on our annual *Canadian Internet Handbook* and various other book projects. This fall, we have five new titles coming out.

Of course, working on so many books about the Internet all at once can lead to a little bit of Net-burnout. Being in the midst of this revolution means you quickly become quite tired of the incessant hype, silliness, and strangeness which surrounds anything having to do with the Internet.

And so this year, after wrapping up the writing, my wife, two kids and I took a vacation to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. By the time we left at the end of July, I needed a break from anything Net-related—and so my voyage was an “unplugged” one. I had no desire to drag along a laptop to surf the Net while at the beach—my intent was to avoid the Internet at all costs.

Of course, this turned out to be darned near impossible. Throughout our travels in P.E.I., the Internet seemed to be everywhere. I could not turn on the television or listen to the radio without seeing or hearing a Web address, or uniform resource locator (URL). The tourist brochures I obtained contained URLs. Local city and community newspapers provided background about Web sites or new Internet initiatives that were under way. Even the brochure for the new bridge linking the rest of the country to P.E.I. featured information about its Web site.

What a difference from even a year ago! As much as I attempted to avoid the Internet, I could not help but realize that it truly has become a part of our information world.

My efforts to avoid the Internet began to unravel even more by the time I visited with my family in Nova Scotia—coming from a family of eight kids, you must understand that there are a lot of them. And most could be considered, I suppose, as technology curmud-

geons. After all, I have been online for 15 years, and for a time, many of them considered my talk about the wonders of the modem-accessible universe to be some kind of mental aberration.

No more—by now, most of them are on the Net. And during this visit, it became evident that they think nothing of looking online for information about a product, service, destination or other topic that they have an interest in. I quickly realized a sea-change in attitude has taken place with the perception of the Internet in my family members during the last 12 months—so much so that it has become a normal part of their day-to-day lives.

I thought about this a lot on the plane ride home, and once I settled in, I began to query my neighbours. It turns out that some of the people I would never have suspected would join the Net now were also online. One elderly chap uses the Internet to access news information from his home in Brazil, and another to research his passions of sport fishing and cooking. One young lady has joined the Net so as to discover new career opportunities once her child starts school full-time this fall, and another to do some real estate research.

What does this have to do with advertising and marketing? Quite a bit, really. We have all been struggling for a few years with the issue of whether the Internet will ever really become a vehicle by which to reach the customer—while those customers quietly and pervasively go online.

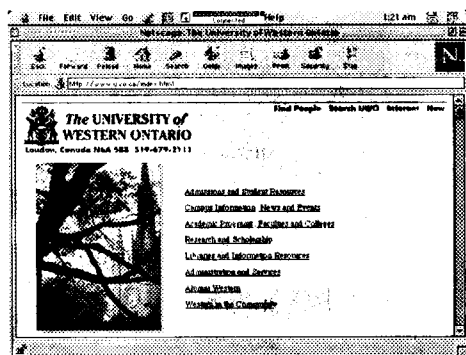
My family and neighbours? Anecdotal evidence, to be sure. But I would suggest you take a look at your own family, and talk with your own neighbours—I am sure you will see the same signs. The Internet is leaving its nest in the world of geekdom, and is becoming part of mainstream society. The Internet is no longer an aberration, but a fundamental part of the information world in which we live. Simply another reason why you need to treat

Continued on page 53

Continued from page 31

available on the Web, cutting back on the number of copies printed," Mathers said. When more professors take advantage of the network, "that's really where the savings will come."

Quinton said ITS already produces the Undergraduate Student Directory online, but that "there are privacy concerns about showing entries, especially phone numbers," he said. The current directory is available from the UWO home page (<http://www.uwo.ca/index.html>).



University of Western Ontario

Western is able to provide users with wide-reaching Internet access because it belongs to ONet, which

formed in 1988 to operate as an Internet service provider for universities, colleges and research institutions.

WUO's connection to the ONet costs Western approximately \$70,000 per year and carries information at a speed of five million bits per second, said Ted Gauci of ITS. Western's connection includes the London and Region Global Network

(LARG*net) community of UWO and Information London, Fanshawe College, London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Health Centre and Roberts Research Institute. Recently the City of London, the London Board of Education and the London Public Library have also joined the ONet connection.

The cost of operating Western's computer system is huge, Mathers said, but ITS is working with University Students' Council and UWO administration to help with the ongoing expenses.

"Internet and e-mail use at Western has grown in leaps and bounds in acceptable use," Mathers said, "and ITS is striving to meet new demands as they arise."

Johanna C. Kowal is a journalism student at the University of Western Ontario.

FUN!

Continued from page 26

chose to create a site about vampires because of an interest in having her own Web page. Despite the suspicions of some of her visitors, she is not a vampire and has no personal connection to any.

McKaig recently became a member of the Forest City Webgirls (<http://info.london.on.ca/webgirls/>), a London networking group for women in and interested in the media. McKaig's enormous dedication to Webmastering already has her defining her job description.

"I want to be able to walk around one day with my business card saying, 'bringing information to the world.'"

With that in mind, it is safe to say then that the Internet has revolutionized McKaig's world, considering she did not know a thing about computers three years ago.

Rula Sharkawi is a journalism student at the University of Western Ontario. There is plenty of fun on the Internet! If you have found a fun Net site or know of a fun story related to information technology, let us know at editor@info.london.on.ca/

FEATURE

Choices abound when selecting an Internet service

Continued from page 33

give you 10 megabytes or more for free. There is also a new pricing trend among Internet services—charging for the number of hits on your page. This is more common in pricing packages for businesses, which receive more hits, however, some services apply fees to personal accounts too. The "monthly transfer limit" in our survey lists the amount of hits or megabytes of bandwidth your Web site is allowed to have before a fee is charged; those with a dash do not charge for visits to your Web site.

• Do you have an older computer? Check to see if the Internet service will connect you. Some services will still provide text-based access for those with computers as old as 286 models with 2800 kbps modems; others will only serve those running Windows 95.

Most important of all: Shop around! A great service a year ago may be a slow service today. Our listings are only a guide—make sure you talk to the services' staff for information. The information here has been obtained from the

Internet services' Web sites, and as much of it as possible has been confirmed by telephone. We have done our best to ensure it is accurate as of late October, but we cannot be responsible for typographical errors or for changes and upgrades to the Internet services and prices—which occur rapidly!

NETTRENDS

Continued from page 54

it with respect, and make it a fundamental part of every marketing campaign that you launch.

Marketing studies will tell us that the "early adopters" joined the Net long ago, but also promised that the real growth will come once the technologically-challenged get over their confusion as to what the Internet is all about and begin to sign online.

That stage is clearly under way.